REVIEW ARTICLE

Transitions from War to Peace: Issues, Challenges and Policy Lessons

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There is a new genre of development literature that does not squarely fit any disciplinary or thematic category. Despite its internal heterogeneity, the genre is distinguished by its focused attention to the problems of reconstructing war-torn societies in the post-Cold War era. It is based on the premise that ongoing transitions from war to peace pose sufficiently distinct challenges to students of development, policy makers and development practitioners to warrant novel analytical approaches and policy responses.

This article will review a small but important sampling of that literature. The four monographs reviewed here were all published in 1996 and were preceded by an earlier crop of works upon which they build.[1] While the review will examine each of the individual studies separately, its broader purpose is to approach these works as a distinct genre and to assess their collective insights and contributions to the field of development studies.

Background and Context

The rapid proliferation of works focusing on post-conflict transitions dates to end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, intra-state, local or regional conflicts were systematically contained or subjugated to the imperatives of East-West power politics. With the end of the Cold War, several long-standing local or regional conflicts, and others that were at various stages of conflagration, came to the limelight capturing the attention of academics, the mass media, the general public and policy makers alike.

The end of the Cold War also provided the opportunity for a critical appraisal of the architecture of international security and of international development that had been erected after World War II. In the decades after 1945, the two superpowers, supported by their respective Cold War partners, presided over the international state system and became custodians of international peace and security. Domestic affairs of Third World states were viewed largely through the prism of their

regional and international security ramifications. They set up and administered elaborate international development assistance structures and programs to prop up and influence the behaviour of a rapidly increasing number of Third World states within an international system based on the principle of the (fictional) equality, territorial integrity and political sovereignty of all states. Thus, within the context of the Cold War, international development assistance was largely an instrument of ensuring the security and survival of the friendly regimes of so-called "nation-states".

With the end of the Cold War, the serious internal problems that had plagued numerous "nation-states" finally came to the fore, requiring a re-thinking of the gains and failures of 50 years of development assistance. In the period from 1989 to 1992, there were 82 armed conflicts, of which only three were between states and most were in the developing countries.[2] By 1996, most of these conflicts were still raging and new ones had been added to the list. As various intra-state conflicts broke into violence, their repercussions spilled over international borders, confronting the international community with "humanitarian emergencies" as well as "security crises." In 1994, out of roughly U.S. $50 billion annual international development assistance, some $8 billion went for peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

While failed or failing states, and the severe trans-national pressures these created, did not constitute direct security threats to the international system, they have raised nagging policy concerns that refuse to go away. As a result, the international community has begun to respond to these "complex emergencies" through various tools and instruments including conflict prevention, conflict mediation, humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

Early peacebuilding and reconstruction[3] efforts by external actors were undertaken in largely unchartered territory and were reactive and experimental in nature. Since the early 1990s, however, considerable experience has been gained, as amply documented by the four monographs reviewed here.

These studies share several common features: they were all commissioned or supported by, or conducted under the auspices of international actors, including the Overseas Development Council, UNDP, the World Bank and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). They involve policy research and offer concrete policy recommendations based on detailed case studies. They recognize the complex internal dynamics of post-conflicts transitions but, to varying degrees, pay special attention to the powerful role of external actors in such transitions. In short, they are very much the research component of the international community's growing engagement with failed and failing states and violent internal conflicts. While each of these studies is task-oriented and designed to provide pragmatic solutions to pressing problems, their importance for development studies is in putting into sharp relief the failures of Cold War development models and in stimulating a healthy debate about the underpinnings, prospects and limitations of the new wave of international assistance programs for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

Nicole Ball with Tammy Halevy, Making Peace Work: The Role of the International Development Community (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1996)

Nicole Ball's policy essay Making Peace Work is based on a two-year ODC research program on Enhancing Security and Development. The program examined the peace processes in Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique and Nicaragua to identify the role of the international donor community in sustaining and consolidating peace. Based on these four case studies, Ball's policy essay draws out general lessons for peacebuilding.

The study recognizes that civil wars occur in countries with different levels of economic and political development, and that transitions from war to peace follow distinct paths. Nonetheless, Ball argues that the experience of prolonged and violent internal strife is sufficiently similar across societies and provides the basis for designing peacebuilding strategies that are applicable to a broad spectrum of countries. Ball further acknowledges that post-conflict reconstruction is likely to take a generation and that the process is arduous, easily reversible and complex; however, she sees no option for the international donor community but to engage actively in the transition through the formulation and implementation of effective policies.

The essay consists of a brief introduction and four substantive parts. Part II is a general overview of the main features of post-conflict countries, their common socio-economic and institutional characteristics, their security concerns and other contextual factors. Part III provides a schematic account of the phases of the peace process and identifies how the international development community can facilitate peacebuilding; Part IV analyses the lessons drawn from early peacebuilding experiences; and finally Part V proposes concrete next steps for the international development community to design and implement more appropriate and effective assistance programs. The book is interspersed with concrete examples from the four case studies that sharply illustrate the essay's general principles.

Drawing from the experience of countries where civil wars ended with negotiated settlements, Ball argues that the international community has a distinct role to play during the four main phases of the peace process: negotiation, cessation of hostilities, transition and consolidation, and post-conflict reconstruction. Having devoted considerable diplomatic and political energy to the negotiation and implementation of the peace agreements, external actors generally tend to lose interest in the urgent tasks that require attention during the transition phase. These include, providing a sufficient level of internal security to inspire confidence for a return to civilian life; strengthening the government's capacity to carry out key activities; assisting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; supporting the rejuvenation of household economies; rehabilitating economic infrastructure; removing landmines from critical sites; stabilizing the currency and rehabilitating financial institutions; promoting national reconciliation; targeting the groups and geographic areas most affected by the conflict. She argues that throughout international assistance should be guided by careful consideration of the political imperatives of the transition to peace.

The study draws six key lessons about the scope and delivery of international assistance. These include the need for a) a new form of international assistance designed specifically for post conflict

transitions; b) the active involvement of the international donor community in the various phases of the peace process; c) support to far-reaching security sector reform; d) the thorough integration of political considerations into transitional assistance; e) strengthening the government's capacity to perform key tasks without bolstering its capacity to use resources for partisan political purposes; f) effective coordination among donor policies and programs to capitalize on the short window of opportunity for effecting significant change in post-conflict contexts.

Ball identifies specific priority areas for donor agencies to improve the quality and effectiveness of their assistance. These consist of issues that can be addressed immediately (such as institutional reform to facilitate appropriate assistance programs in post-conflict situations, extending the time horizon of peacebuilding activities, better division of labour and coordination among donor agencies) and areas where gaps in understanding require further analysis. In light of accumulated experience, she urges donor agencies to agree on priority areas and to develop operational guidelines for each of those areas within an overall framework.

Ball's study establishes a high standard for the genre of works reviewed here. It is comprehensive in its consideration of the relevant issues, highly incisive in its analysis of complex and difficult priority areas, and practical in its policy recommendations. The strengths, as well as limitations, it shares with the other three monographs will be dealt with in the concluding section. However, one feature that requires special attention here is its inadequate treatment of inter and intra-donor politics and the conflicting motives that shape donors' aid policies. As Ball points out, donor assistance programs suffer from piece-mealism, lack of coordination and internal contradictions, and these need to be redressed. However, donors' aid policies are also part and parcel of their broader foreign, security, economic and trade policies and cannot be reformed significantly in isolation from their broader institutional and policy framework. This clearly is a different order of business than the one Making Peace Work has set out to address; fortunately, its analysis and reformist recommendations point in the right direction.

Jonathan Moore, The UN and Complex Emergencies: Rehabilitation in Third World Transitions (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1996).

This monograph is also a policy essay, based on comparative analysis of the performance of the UN system and the international donor community in providing rehabilitation assistance to four countries: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique and Somalia. These countries, all of them "Cold War legacies", were chosen because they represent interesting differences within a "generic category" of war-torn countries.

Jonathan Moore, a Senior Advisor to UNDP and former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, undertook his study with support from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The study has two objectives: to highlight the complexity of the tasks that confront the international community in rehabilitating war-torn societies, and to appeal to the international community not merely to react to the symptoms of violent conflicts but to target their root causes to avoid recurrent crises.

For Moore, rehabilitation is the missing link in the "continuum" from emergency relief to sustainable development--what others have called "peacebuilding" or post-conflict reconstruction. His essay is intended to offer pragmatic proposals to reform the design, financing and implementation of effective rehabilitation assistance. Moore believes that most of the current predicaments the international community faces can only be solved through multilateral effort. This leads him to argue that, despite its serious limitations, there is no substitute but to make the UN better prepared for the task.

Following a brief introduction, the essay is divided into several sections. Section II defines the context for rehabilitation efforts based on the four country case studies. Section III describes the nature of the problem, the major gaps and obstacles, and the appropriate methods and programmes. Section IV identifies the key actors and the nature of their interaction in the field, specifically focusing on in-country UN structures and their relations with headquarters. Section V examines the interface between rehabilitation programs and the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Finally, the last section contains 20 short-term conclusions and recommendations on "the rehabilitation bridge", the need for better coordination among key actors and the importance of high-level support from the UN system.

The monograph includes several useful appendices. Appendix Five lists specific examples of "rehabilitation" programmes and activities in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique and Somalia ranging from mine clearance and voluntary repatriation to support for public administration and maintaining essential services.

While Ball's study is that of a well-informed policy analyst, Moore's essay has the compelling immediacy and impatience of an internationalist and political "insider" who clearly sees the need for reform--at the level both of the UN's political bodies and operational agencies, and of the donor countries that "finance and manipulate" UN's work. Moore readily acknowledges the contradictions, fragmentation and inconstancy that mark donor country policies and programs in development assistance; however, his essay also shies away from situating UN and donor behaviour within the broader logic of international politics and of donor foreign policies in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, while there are compelling reasons and practical suggestions for reforming the UN system for the tasks that await it in the 1990s, recent reform proposals have effectively been neutralized by the competing interests and policies of key member states. Despite its brevity, Moore's essay provides a strong argument for a more effective role for the UN in the post-Cold War era.

Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner and Ingo Wiederhofer, The Transition from War to Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1996) [4]

One of the most pressing and perilous tasks that face countries emerging from violent conflicts is demobilization and reintegration of military personnel, and no region is more vulnerable to the threat of new or renewed violence posed by disgruntled military personnel or ex-combatants than Sub-Saharan Africa. This study contains lessons from World Bank supported demobilization and reintegration programs (DRP) in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda. The World Bank became involved in DRPs through a specially-constituted working group on African experience with DRPs and

through its technical and financial assistance to various governments seeking help in the design and implementation of DRPs. The latter have so far included Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Chad, Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Other possible candidates include Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Bosnia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka.

The principal objective of this study was to inform Bank management and staff, international organizations, client governments and NGOs about "best practices" in DRPs based on detailed country experiences. However, it is important to note that DRPs are only one aspect of the Bank's growing interest in post conflict transitions under President James Wolfensohn, who clearly sees the Bank playing a larger role in post-conflict reconstruction and development in line with its original mandate.

The Transition from War to Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa recognizes that demobilization and reintegration are not discrete activities, nor are they simply adjuncts to demilitarization programs. Instead, they are part of a "seamless web of transition from military to civilian life, without a clear beginning or end". Despite the specificity of each country program, the study points to the common issues raised by DRPs. Chapter 1 discusses the design of DRPs covering issues related to targeting of programs, the various stages of demobilization (including cantonment, orientation, discharge and transportation), reinsertion (including the provision of housing, health, education and safety nets) and finally reintegration. Chapter 2 focuses on the wider social and institutional aspects of reintegration and provides useful hints about the role of external actors in assisting or hindering the implementation of DRPs. Chapter 3 contains lessons to be learned from program failures. Chapter 4 addresses the economic impact of DRPs--the so-called "peace dividend," and argues that the peace dividend should be understood in socio-economic, as well as financial, terms. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes data drawn from the Ethiopian, Namibian and Ugandan cases and contrasts these with the experiences of other African countries to underscore particular problems and approaches. The body of the report focuses primarily on the technical aspects of DRPs. However, Chapter 6 argues that DRPs should be considered as part of a broader effort to prevent conflicts and to promote reconciliation, and identifies a clear role for the World Bank in post-conflict transitions. The Bank, it maintains, can "promote a secure and stable environment for development by supporting the removal and nonproliferation of mines and other antipersonnel weapons; encouraging the realignment of national public expenditures from nonproductive to productive sectors; assisting in the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into a productive civilian life; financing the reconstruction of physical assets; and helping build social capital." These, it concludes, "are vital areas for Bank intellectual leadership, resource mobilisation, and donor coordination" and would "lend credence to the role of a DRP as a central element in the reconstruction and development of war-torn societies and can play an important leadership role in the larger transition from war to peace."

Despite its technical orientation, the study is an important contribution to the policy debate on post-conflict transitions to the extent that it highlights the complex interlinkages among competing priorities in post-conflict settings and the powerful role external agencies play in influencing the reconstruction agenda. It is important to note that until recently, issues related to military expenditures, demobilization or demilitarization were considered outside the realm of development

assistance. It is a sign of the changing context of international development that these now constitute critical areas of concern (and investment) for the international community, including the IFIs.

James K. Boyce, (ed.) Economic Policy for Building Peace: The Lessons of El Salvador (Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 1996)

Unlike the three other works reviewed here, the Boyce volume focuses exclusively on the experience of a single country and its main interest is in economic policy. However, like the others, its concerns are not country-specific. The study was commissioned by the UNDP office in El Salvador, carried out by an independent team of ten international economists, and reviewed by an advisory panel of prominent academics and development economists.

For students of post-conflict reconstruction, El Salvador constitutes an interesting case study on many levels. Alvaro de Soto and Graciana del Castillo explain why:

> El Salvador's case illustrated the lack of transparency and coordination within the UN system as the IMF and the Bank did not keep the UN abreast of the economic program they sponsored, and the U.N. neglected to inform the Bretton Woods institutions of the peace accords. It was as if a patient lay on the operating table with the left and right sides of his body separated by a curtain and unrelated surgery being performed on each side.[5]

Economic Policy for Building Peace sets out to examine what ails El Salvador and to offer effective prescriptions for its recovery. The book consists of eleven substantive chapters by ten authors and introductory and concluding chapters by the editor. Boyce succinctly states the book's main thesis:

> The interdependence of peace and development in El Salvador is widely recognized. . . . Yet there has been little systematic discussion of how economic policy should be reshaped in the special circumstances of a country emerging from civil war. . . . Recognition of the interdependence between peace and development has been translated into the questionable precept that if the peace process were allowed to interfere with economic policy, both would fail. This book is based on the contrary premise that *unless* the peace process is allowed to reshape economic policy, both will fail.

The book starts with an analysis of the political economy of contemporary El Salvador, with a special focus on El Salvador's "negotiated revolution". The first three chapters provide a general overview of the main challenges that confront the adjustment to peace, the historical background to the conflict and the war economy of the 1980s. The following nine chapters focus on concrete issues, but always in relation to the broader concern for consolidating political stability and ensuring social peace. The main topics covered are: macroeconomic performance and policies since 1989, the peace accords and postwar reconstruction, domestic resource mobilization, external resource

mobilization, distributional implications of macroeconomic policy, the financial system, structural adjustment and the agricultural sector, environmental degradation, and exports.

In line with the study's main premise that the peace process should be allowed to shape economic policy, each of the above chapters approaches economic policy and performance in light of broader non-economic considerations. The book identifies two broad sets of economic issues in the adjustment toward peace: the problem of financing the immediate costs of peace, and the longer term linkages between economic growth, income distribution and consolidation of peace. While the individual chapters provide detailed analyses of the key economic factors that stimulate growth and productivity, collectively they serve to underscore the book's underlying theme that policy choices in such critical areas as resource mobilization, land reform, export promoting incentive structures, fiscal policy have far-reaching political ramifications and can contribute directly to the ultimate success or failure of the peace process.

The book's discussion of El Salvador's experience in the negotiation and implementation of the peace accords (including such critical issues as demobilization, demilitarization, reintegration of ex-combatants, institutional and security sector reforms) is particularly instructive. Chapter V provides a useful analysis of the range of internal and external actors whose conflicting interests helped to fuel the civil war and have continued to shape the peace. Chapter V and Chapter VII, on external resource mobilization, demonstrate the critical role played by external actors in El Salvador's domestic affairs. The book firmly argues in favour of sustained donor assistance for post-conflict reconstruction, with the added advice that such assistance should be linked to "peace conditionality."

For generalists and specialists alike, Economic Policy for Building Peace is imperative reading. Its major findings and recommendations are country-specific and are intended to provide internal as well as external actors with the appropriate analytical and policy tools to respond to the critical challenges confronting El Salvador. Yet, the book also challenges conventional economic theory in its analysis of the powerful complementarities among growth, equity and the consolidation of peace. Thus, its findings may be of relevance not only to countries emerging from violent conflicts but also to others who are dangerously close to experiencing the destructive consequences of economic development strategies that are blind to political and equity concerns.

Conclusion

The four monographs reviewed here share several important features. Their starting point is the same, namely, in post-conflict transitions, political considerations gain added importance and policies to consolidate the peace and to facilitate socio-economic recovery have to be mutually reinforcing. They also agree that the international community has a critical role to play in reconstructing, and this requires significant reform of current instruments and institutions of international assistance. They further acknowledge that such reform should be based on a better analysis of field experiences and should result in calibrated policy responses. Finally, they offer concrete suggestions and proposals to guide and inform post-conflict assistance policies and programs.

In short, as a group they are motivated by a desire to make the system work better. They represent a powerful voice for activist-internationalism and for the reform of international institutions. Perhaps the genre's greatest strength is also its weakest point: it is focused too narrowly on identifying the immediate humanitarian and security tasks that confront the international community in order to provide policy relevant guidelines. In its immediacy and urgency, it fails to situate the today's "complex emergencies" and "post-conflict transitions" within a broader systemic framework. The prevalence of internal strife in various sub-regions and the series of failed or failing states in the 1990s are largely by-products of state-centric development models that were put into place during the fifty years of East-West power politics. Their resolution and alleviation depend, therefore, not simply on the design and delivery of better assistance policies or programs but on the reconfiguration of the post Cold War international system which is simultaneously being shaped by centrifugal as well as centripetal forces.

The weighty empirical evidence drawn from detailed case studies as well as the compelling arguments presented in these monographs for a significantly reformed international system deserve to be considered in conjunction with the more theoretical works on the dynamics and legacy of the political economy of the Cold War and the complex linkages between security and development in the post-Cold War era. A new crop of recent works on international development and security throws critical light on the role and limits of the nation-state in the global economy, examines the deadly appeal of territorially or ethnically-based "mini" states, "unbundles" the concept of political sovereignty and investigates frameworks for international governance. Not surprisingly, that body of literature generally shies away from providing the type of "hands-on" practical policy advice that marks the works reviewed here. The contrast between the two genres points to the critical need to bridge the wide gap between international relations theory and practice, between security and development studies, and finally, between academic and policy researchers. At a minimum, the four monographs reviewed here should serve to launch a vigorous debate with the broader academic community about the underpinnings, prospects and limitations of the new models of international development that are emerging in the 1990s on peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

ENDNOTES

1. For an annotated bibliography of works on post-conflict reconstruction, see Patricia Weiss Fagen, "After the Conflict: A Review of Selected Sources on Rebuilding War-Torn Societies" (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Social Development, 1995). One of the earlier treatments of the subject is found in Anthony Lake, et.al, After the War: Reconstruction in Afghanistan, Indochina, Central America, Southern Africa, and the Horn of Africa (New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publications, 1990).

2. UNDP Human Development Report, 1993; Project Ploughshares, Armed Conflicts Report: 1996 (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Grebel College, 1996).

3. There is no consensus among researchers, policymakers or practitioners concerning the scope, boundaries and exact meeting of the terms peacebuilding, rehabilitation, reconstruction, post-conflict transitions. The variations as well as overlap in usage will be pointed out during the discussion of the individual studies reviewed here.

4. For a detailed discussion of the case studies upon which this report is based, see World Bank Discussion Paper No.331, Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition: The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda (1996). This study follows earlier research, based on secondary data, by the Bank's Africa Regional Office which was published as a Discussion Paper in 1993 entitled Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Personnel in Africa: The Evidence from Seven Country Case Studies.

5. Alvaro de Soto and Graciana del Castillo, "Obstacles to Peacebuilding," Foreign Policy, Spring, 1994, p.74). A recent study by Rex Brynen on "The (very) Political Economy of the West Bank and Gaza: Learning Lessons About Peace-Building and Development" in J.W. Wright (ed.) The Economics of Peace in the Middle East (forthcoming) provides an interesting contrast to the donor responses to post-conflict reconstruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territories following the Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and the PLO.

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BIOGRAPHY

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